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Big Week: Top 10 Tilt, NCAA Berths Upcoming GNAC Title, West Seeding Could Be Decided Saturday

On the verge of madness. As the Olympic flame flickers out of sight, March Madness comes to the fore this week for Seattle Pacific University's 9th-ranked men's basketball team. The Falcons (14-2, 22-3), winners in seven of the last eight outings and 12 straight at home, host the final two regular season games with a chance to claim the Great Northwest Athletic Conference championship and one of the top seeds in the West. They begin with Western Oregon (6-10, 9-16) Thursday night (Feb. 28) and then, in the game of the week in NCAA Division II, face 5th-ranked Humboldt State (15-1, 24-1) Saturday night (Mar. 2.). Playoff berths and pairings will be announced Sunday (Mar. 3) at 6 p.m. with the regional tourney Mar. 7-9.

It could be huge. If SPU can defeat Western Oregon, Saturday's game will essentially serve as the GNAC title game. Humboldt State currently owns a one-game lead and enters the week with a 10-game win streak. Not only is it the nation's only game featuring two top 10 teams, but it's a great statistical matchup. The Falcons are the top defensive club in the conference and one the premier shooting teams in Div. II while the Lumberjacks rank No. 3 nationally in offense and feature the GNAC's top scorer and rebounder. More important than the conference crown, the game will also affect the West seeding. The No. 1 seed—now Cal State San Bernardino—earns homecourt advantage and, along with the No. 2 seed, a first-round bye. Humboldt State was No. 2 last week, followed by Cal State Bakersfield and Seattle Pacific. Only the top six teams from the region will qualify for the playoffs.

Senior citizens. As if Earthquake Appreciation and Fan Appreciation nights, the GNAC title and NCAA seeding weren't enough, Saturday also marks the final home games for three very special seniors, each starters for at least two seasons. Center **Eric Sandrin** (Sr., 6-10, Bothell, Wa./Shorecrest) is coming on strong, as evidenced by his 35 points and 14 rebounds during the Alaska road sweep which earned him GNAC co-player of the week. Sandrin's monstrous dunks are among the most memorable in school history. The other two seniors have become fixtures in the Falcons' success the past four years, to the tune of 93 wins—more than any other players. **Nick Johnson** (Sr., 6-3, Burlington, Wa./Burlington-Edison) has become one of the most complete guards, playing tenacious defense at one end and becoming a very productive offensive force at the other. And there's never been anyone like **Brannon Stone** (Sr., 6-9, Oak Harbor, Wa.), the four-year starter at forward who does it all, leading the team in blocked shots, rebounds and assists all four seasons and also ranking among the top five in career scoring.

Special nights. The Falcons intend to celebrate some history in conjunction with the games. On the first anniversary of the 6.8-magnitude Nisqually shaker it will be Earthquake Appreciation Night Thursday. Fans will receive quake preparedness brochures and contest prizes will be survival kits. Saturday's doubleheader features lots of giveaways for fans, courtesy of Coca-Cola.

A history lesson. SPU has a shot at making history of its own. With 22 wins, the team is one away from tying the best regular-season win total, set over 30 games in 1992. The Falcons are on record pace in hitting free throws, as well. They lead the GNAC and rate fifth nationally (.769) and are well ahead of the record pace as a team of .741, set in 1966-67. Johnson's hitting 90.9 percent at the foul line (12th in the nation) whereas the record is 90.2. The Falcons are also marksmen from the field (first in the GNAC, 13th in the NCAA), connecting on 49.5 percent. Seattle Pacific has finished above 50 percent from the floor in

2001-02 MEN'S BASKETBALL

SPU Quick Facts

2001-02 Season Record—22-3 (14-2 GNAC)

Coach—Ken Bone, 12th year

Coach's SPU Record—249-95

Coach's Career Record—256-116

This Week's Schedule

Thr., Feb. 28, 7 p.m.

vs. Western Oregon (6-10, 9-16)

Brougham Pavilion, Seattle, Wa.

Sat., Mar. 2, 7 p.m.

vs. Humboldt State (15-1, 24-1)

Brougham Pavilion, Seattle, Wa.

Last Weeks' Results

SPU 95, at Alaska Anchorage 86 OT

SPU 97, at Alaska Fairbanks 62

Streaks & Such

The Falcons have won 12 straight at home since a 1-point loss in the opening game of the season

Stat de jour

Nick Johnson ranks fifth in NCAA free throw accuracy and is on school-record pace at 90.9 percent. He has made 21 in a row over six games

NCAA Division II Poll

1. Kentucky Wesleyan
2. Northeastern State (Ok.)
3. Cal State San Bernardino

also

5. Humboldt State
9. **Seattle Pacific**
10. Cal State Bakersfield

GNAC Standings

	W	L	W	L
Humboldt State	15	1	24	1
Seattle Pacific	14	2	22	3
Western Washington	13	3	19	6
Alaska Anchorage	8	8	8	17
Saint Martin's	8	9	10	15
Central Washington	8	9	15	10
Western Oregon	6	10	9	16
Northwest Nazarene	5	11	9	17
Seattle University	3	13	5	22
Alaska Fairbanks	1	15	3	22

eight of the last 12 games and is coming off a season-best 62 percent shooting in a 97-62 win at Alaska Fairbanks.

It's Yuey time. Several players have stepped up in clutch situations this season but lately the key figure has been **Yusef Aziz** (Jr., 6-4, Seattle, Wa./Foster-Highline CC). Although he'd made big plays in the late stages of several earlier games in February, Aziz was due for something big at Alaska Anchorage, and he delivered. He scored eight of a season-high 26 points (10-17 FGs) in overtime of a 95-86 triumph. Aziz, a contender for newcomer of the year, is eighth in GNAC scoring (16.4), fifth in field-goal percentage (.562) and seventh in steals (1.76).

Put-backs. Johnson and Stone were both voted to the Academic All-District VIII second team last week. Both business administration majors, Stone has a 3.51 grade point average and Johnson a 3.42...Hawaii Pacific, Montana State Billings and Western Washington rounded out the top seven in the West last week...With seven more steals Stone becomes the all-time leader and he's 18 rebounds from No. 3. He has owned every blocked shot record since his sophomore season, leads the team in assists (4.5), rebounds (6.1), 3-pointers (49) and blocked shots (1.32) and is No. 3 in scoring (11.0)...Defensively, SPU leads the GNAC in the two major statistical categories: scoring (66.4) and field-goal percentage (.412). It is 9-0 when holding foes's shooting under 40 percent and it's 18-1 when forcing more turnovers...In the five games in which it has shot under 45 percent, the record is only 3-2...Seattle Pacific also leads the conference in scoring margin (+14.8) and is second in rebounding margin (+5.3) and steals (9.0)...**Daniel Sandrin** (Jr., 6-7, Bothell, Wa./Bothell-Portland) missed the UAA game and played 10 scoreless minutes at UAF due to tender ankle...Johnson, who has made 21 straight at the line, dating back to Feb. 2, is first in free throw accuracy (.909) and ninth in field goal percentage (.539). Stone is fourth in assists and sixth in blocks...The Falcons made all six field goals and 10 of 11 free throws in the 25-point overtime period at Anchorage...The margin at Fairbanks was the largest on the road since the 1995-96 season and a 40-point win at Northwest College...Stone had a season-high 22 points vs. the Nanooks on 9-11 shooting, that after going 2-11 at Anchorage. Also getting season-best totals were **Jesse Keely** (Jr., 6-7, Fircrest, Wa./Bellarmine) with nine, **Aaron Bellessa** (Jr., 6-2, Federal Way, Wa./Decatur) with eight and **Joe Sundberg** (Jr., 6-1, Longview, Wa./Mark Morris-Skagit Valley CC) with six...Eric Sandrin's double-double of 18 points and 12 boards vs. UAA was his second. He has averaged 15.8 points and shot 69 percent from the field in the last four games.

Opponent & series notes. The Falcons have won seven of eight meetings with Western Oregon, including five in a row. The Wolves' Robert Day is the No. 2 scorer in the GNAC, averaging 20.6 points...Seattle Pacific had won 16 in a row over Humboldt State until falling 84-78 in Arcata, Ca., Jan. 24. The 'Jacks, who average 91.6 points, feature sophomores Austin Nichols, the NCAA's No. 6 scorer (23.7), and Fred Hooks, the country's No. 3 rebounder (12.1). They have not lost since Jan. 17.

2001-02 Men's Basketball Roster

No.	Name	Pos	Hgt	Yr	Exp	Hometown (High School/Last Coll.)
1	Jordan Lee	G	6-2	Fr	RS	Tacoma, Wa. (Life Christian)
3	Maurice Cato	G	6-0	Jr	TR	Fairfield, Ca (Fairfield/Skyline)
4	Mike Bushmaker	F	6-7	Fr	HS	Yakima, Wa (Eisenhower)
10	Adam Harris	G	6-0	Sr	3V	Fox Island, Wa. (Gig Harbor)
11	Aaron Bellessa	G	6-2	Jr	2V	Federal Way, Wa. (Decatur)
15	Jeff Knudson	F	6-6	Fr	HS	Mukilteo, Wa (Kamiak)
20	Yusef Aziz	F	6-4	Jr	TR	Tukwila, Wa (Foster/Highline)
21	Brannon Stone	F	6-9	Sr	3V	Oak Harbor, Wa. (Oak Harbor)
22	Jesse Keely	F/C	6-7	Jr	1V	Fircrest, Wa. (Bellarmine/Portland)
23	Nick Johnson	G	6-3	Sr	3V	Burlington, Wa. (Burlington-Edison)
30	Gene Woodard	F	6-4	Jr	2V	Edmonds, Wa. (O'Dea)
32	Joe Sundberg	G	6-1	Jr	TR	Longview, Wa (M. Morris/Skagit Valley)
34	Eric Sandrin	C	6-10	Sr	1V	Bothell, Wa. (Shorecrest/Portland)
40	Daniel Sandrin	F	6-7	Jr	1V	Bothell, Wa. (Bothell/Portland)
42	Chris Cohen	F	6-8	So	1V	Saint Helens, Or. (Saint Helens)

Head Coach: Ken Bone

Associate Head Coach: Jeff Hironaka

Assistant Coaches: Jarrett Mentink, George Parker, Reggie Paul

2001-02 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time
Nov. 6	BLUE ANGELS (ex.)	W, 86-67
Nov. 9	NW ALL-STARs (ex.)	W, 90-68
Nov. 16-17	VITAMILK TIP-OFF CLASSIC	
Nov. 16	SPU v INDIANAPOLIS	L, 67-68
Nov. 17	SPU v LOCK HAVEN	W, 87-59
Nov. 24	at Seattle University	W, 64-49
Nov. 27	NORTHWEST COLL.	W, 103-66
Dec. 1	HAWAII PACIFIC	W, 86-56
Dec. 6	at Central Washington*	W, 101-100 ot
Dec. 8	at Saint Martin's*	W, 73-46
Dec. 15	Henderson St. (at Las Vegas)	W, 68-63
Dec. 16	Ashland, Oh. (at Las Vegas)	W, 76-63
Dec. 28-29	OAK HARBOR FREIGHT LINES CL.	
Dec. 28	TEXAS A&M COMMERCE	W, 78-62
Dec. 29	LEWIS-CLARK ST.	W, 80-64
Jan. 3	NORTHWEST NAZARENE*	W, 85-64
Jan. 5	SEATTLE UNIVERSITY*	W, 72-67
Jan. 12	WESTERN WASH.*	W, 96-89
Jan. 17	ALASKA FAIRBANKS*	W, 81-56
Jan. 19	ALASKA ANCHORAGE*	W, 95-64
Jan. 24	at Humboldt State*	L, 78-84
Jan. 26	at Western Oregon*	W, 73-57
Jan. 31	SAINT MARTIN'S*	W, 74-59
Feb. 2	CENTRAL WASH.*	W, 84-59
Feb. 7	at Seattle University*	W, 72-46
Feb. 9	at Northwest Nazarene*	W, 86-83
Feb. 16	at Western Washington*	L, 80-88
Feb. 21	at Alaska Anchorage*	ot W, 95-86
Feb. 23	at Alaska Fairbanks*	W, 97-62
Feb. 28	WESTERN OREGON*	7:00
Mar. 2	HUMBOLDT STATE*	7:00
Mar. 7-9	NCAA West Regional	
Mar. 21-23	NCAA Elite Eight at Evansville, In.	

*Great Northwest Athletic Conference games
All times are Pacific

2001-02 Season Leaders

Scoring

Yusef Aziz	16.4
Nick Johnson	13.0
Brannon Stone	11.0
Maurice Cato	10.4
Eric Sandrin	10.7

Rebounds

Brannon Stone	6.1
Eric Sandrin	5.8
Yusef Aziz	5.7

Assists

Brannon Stone	4.5
Maurice Cato	2.9

Steals

Yusef Aziz	1.76
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Blocked Shots

Brannon Stone	1.32
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Field Goal Percentage

Daniel Sandrin	.580
Yusef Aziz	.562

Three Point Percentage

Brannon Stone	(49-131) .374
Maurice Cato	(42-117) .359

Free Throw Percentage

Nick Johnson	(70-77) .909
Maurice Cato	(55-67) .821

Team	Pts.	Reb	FG%	FT%	3P%
SPU	82.0	35.9	.495	.769	.356
Opp.	66.4	30.7	.412	.736	.349

Seattle Pacific University
2001-02 Men's Basketball Statistics
Record: 22- 3/ 14- 2 GNAC

Date	Opponent	Score	Site	Attend	Record	Leading Scorer	Leading Rebounder
11/16	Indianapolis	67- 68 L	H Seattle ,Wa.	675	0- 1	17- Nick Johnson	8- Nick Johnson
11/17	Lock Haven	W 87- 59	H Seattle, Wa.	565	1- 1	17- Yusef Aziz	9- Yusef Aziz
11/24	Seattle University	W 64- 49	A Seattle, Wa.	310	2- 1	12- Eric Sandrin	5-Stn/E. San./Kly/John.
11/27	Northwest College	W 103- 66	H Seattle, Wa.	575	3- 1	19- Nick Johnson	8- Aziz/Johnson
12/ 1	Hawaii Pacific	W 86- 56	H Seattle, Wa.	425	4- 1	15- Yusef Aziz	8- Yusef Aziz
12/ 6	* Central Washington	W 101-100 (OT)	A Ellensburg, Wa.	2100	5- 1	28- Maurice Cato	12- Eric Sandrin
12/ 8	* Saint Martin's	W 73- 46	A Lacey, Wa.	662	6- 1	11- Nick Johnson	9- Nick Johnson
12/15	Henderson State	W 68- 63	N Las Vegas, Nv.	106	7- 1	25- Yusef Aziz	7- Eric Sandrin
12/16	Ashland	W 76- 63	N Las Vegas, Nv.	200	8- 1	18- Brannon Stone	8- Brannon Stone
12/28	Tx. A&M Commerce	W 78- 62	H Seattle, Wa.	325	9- 1	18- Yusef Aziz	8- Yusef Aziz
12/29	Lewis-Clark St.	W 80- 64	H Seattle ,Wa.	475	10- 1	19- Yusef Aziz	8- Stone/Johnson
1/ 3	* Northwest Nazarene	W 85- 64	H Seattle, Wa.	675	11- 1	21- Yusef Aziz	7- Eric Sandrin
1/ 5	* Seattle University	W 72- 67	H Seattle, Wa.	1275	12- 1	18- Yusef Aziz	11- Yusef Aziz
1/12	* Western Wash.	W 96- 89	H Seattle, Wa.	1875	13- 1	28- Nick Johnson	6- Nick Johnson
1/17	* Alaska Fairbanks	W 81- 56	H Seattle, Wa.	550	14- 1	17- Brannon Stone	10- Brannon Stone
1/19	* Alaska Anchorage	W 95- 64	H Seattle, Wa.	1150	15- 1	17- Yusef Aziz	8- Eric Sandrin
1/24	* Humboldt State	78- 84 L	A Arcata, Ca.	1632	15- 2	23- Nick Johnson	8- Yusef Aziz
1/26	* Western Oregon	W 73- 57	H Monmouth, Or.	650	16- 2	25- Yusef Aziz	7- Yusef Aziz
1/31	* Saint Martin's	W 74- 59	H Seattle, Wa.	775	17- 2	19- Maurice Cato	11- Brannon Stone
2/ 2	* Central Washington	W 84- 59	H Seattle, Wa.	2675	18- 2	16- Maurice Cato	16- Brannon Stone
2/ 7	* Seattle University	W 72- 46	A Seattle, Wa.	540	19- 2	16- Cato/Stone	11- Eric Sandrin
2/ 9	* Northwest Nazarene	W 86- 83	A Nampa, Id.	763	20- 2	19- Nick Johnson	10- Brannon Stone
2/16	* Western Washington	80- 88 L	A Bellingham, Wa.	2222	20- 3	16- Brannon Stone	11- Yusef Aziz
2/21	* Alaska Anchorage	W 95- 86 (OT)	A Anchorage, Ak.	792	21- 3	26- Yusef Aziz	12- Eric Sandrin
2/23	* Alaska Fairbanks	W 97- 62	A Fairbanks, Ak.	350	22- 3	22- Brannon Stone	6- Yusef Aziz

* - GNAC Game

	GP-GS	— All FG —			— 3 Pt FG —			— FT —			— Rebounds —														
		M-	A	Pct	M-	A	Pct	M-	A	Pct	Off	Def	Tot	Avg	A	TO	BLK	STL	PF	D	Min-	Avg	Pts	Avg	
Seattle Pacific	25-22	150-	267	56.2	14-	41	34.1	96-	135	71.1	56	87	143	5.7	47	35	13	44	43-	1	706-	28.2	410	16.4	
Yusef Aziz	25-22	150-	267	56.2	14-	41	34.1	96-	135	71.1	56	87	143	5.7	47	35	13	44	43-	1	706-	28.2	410	16.4	
Aaron Bellessa	21- 0	8-	17	47.1	1-	2	50.0	8-	12	66.7	4	18	22	1.0	31	19	0	7	21-	0	237-	11.3	25	1.2	
Maurice Cato	25-24	82-	200	41.0	42-	117	35.9	55-	67	82.1	6	33	39	1.6	73	56	0	35	64-	1	589-	23.6	261	10.4	
Chris Cohen	18- 0	11-	22	50.0	0-	0	0.0	5-	8	62.5	10	15	25	1.4	7	6	0	2	7-	0	72-	4.0	27	1.5	
Adam Harris	17- 1	9-	17	52.9	8-	14	57.1	15-	16	93.8	6	10	16	0.9	13	14	1	8	21-	0	184-	10.8	41	2.4	
Nick Johnson	25-25	118-	219	53.9	19-	52	36.5	70-	77	90.9	43	73	116	4.6	55	28	2	23	39-	1	743-	29.7	325	13.0	
Jesse Keely	23- 0	14-	43	32.6	1-	2	50.0	12-	15	80.0	19	19	38	1.7	8	19	4	7	24-	0	168-	7.3	41	1.8	
Jordan Lee	25- 0	24-	55	43.6	12-	33	36.4	3-	6	50.0	4	10	14	0.6	14	14	0	9	17-	0	234-	9.4	63	2.5	
Daniel Sandrin	24- 1	58-	100	58.0	9-	25	36.0	45-	58	77.6	20	51	71	3.0	26	29	6	13	43-	0	419-	17.5	170	7.1	
Eric Sandrin	25-23	100-	198	50.5	8-	38	21.1	59-	77	76.6	45	99	144	5.8	42	60	18	14	79-	3	576-	23.0	267	10.7	
Brannon Stone	25-25	96-	211	45.5	49-	131	37.4	35-	43	81.4	34	118	152	6.1	112	54	33	38	55-	1	746-	29.8	276	11.0	
Joe Sundberg	15- 0	3-	11	27.3	2-	4	50.0	2-	6	33.3	3	5	8	0.5	3	3	2	1	4-	0	52-	3.5	10	0.7	
Gene Woodard	25- 2	46-	92	50.0	3-	13	23.1	40-	59	67.8	24	34	58	2.3	16	22	3	22	27-	0	349-	14.0	135	5.4	
Team											31	20	51			0								0	
Seattle Pacific	25-25	719-	1452	49.5	168-	472	35.6	445-	579	76.9	305	592	897	35.9	447	359	82	223	444-	7			2051	82.0	
Opponents	25-25	582-	1414	41.2	178-	510	34.9	318-	432	73.6	278	489	767	30.7	346	420	63	183	503-	22			1660	66.4	

	— First Half —			— Second Half —			— Game —		
All FG	359-	737	48.7%	360-	715	50.3%	719-	1452	49.5%
3 Pt FG	90-	258	34.9%	78-	214	36.4%	168-	472	35.6%
FT	144-	183	78.7%	301-	396	76.0%	445-	579	76.9%

Deadball Rebounds: Seattle Pacific 93, Opponents 56
Opponent Team Rebounds: 67 — (Offense: 33 Defense: 34)
Technical Fouls: Seattle Pacific 1 — Bench 1; Opponents 4Bench 2